

## Stairway Door Locks

**BOCA Section 1014.11.3 Door locks:** All interior *stairway means of egress* doors shall be openable from both sides without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

### Exceptions

1. Stairway **discharge** doors shall be openable from the egress side and shall only be locked from the opposite side.
2. This section shall not apply to doors arranged in accordance with Sections 403.10 and 1017.4.

Based on adverse fire experience where occupants have become trapped in smoke-filled stairway enclosures, every stairway door must be arranged to permit an occupant reentry into the building without the use of any tools, keys or special knowledge or effort. For security reasons, this restriction does not apply to the discharge door from the stairways enclosure, which is open to the outside. Section 403.10 permits the locking of the doors from the stairway side, provided the doors are capable of being unlocked from a fire command station and there is a communication system with the stairway enclosure that allows contact with the fire command station. It would be reasonable to permit this arrangement in buildings other than high-rise buildings.

The reference to Section 1017.4 clarifies that the special locking arrangements permitted for egress doors may also be applied in this instance. It should be noted that the locking arrangements permitted in Section 1017.4 are limited to certain types of doors, are restricted by use groups, and may require other protection features such as automatic detection or sprinkler systems. Please note that Section 1017.4 does not allow for restrictions on locking the door from the side opposite the egress side.

The new Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) is scheduled to be adopted on Sept. 1, 2003, and will use the 2000 IBC (as amended) for the referenced building code.

**IBC Section 1003.3.1.8.4 Stairway doors:** Interior stairway means of egress doors shall be openable from both sides without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

### Exceptions:

1. Stairway **discharge** doors shall be openable from the egress side and shall only be locked for the opposite side.
2. This section shall not apply to doors arranged in accordance with Section 403.11 (similar to BOCA Section 403.10).
3. In stairways serving not more than four stories, doors are permitted to be locked from the side opposite the egress side, provided they are openable from the egress side.